

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 3433

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJ: ZACCAGNINI: THE MAN, THEY SYMBOL AND THE POLICY

SUMMARY: SINCE REPLACING FANFANI AFTER THE TRAUMATIC JUNE 15 REGIONAL ELECTIONS, CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY SECRETARY ZACCAGNINI HAS DEVELOPED WIDE PUBLIC RESPECT FOR HIS PERSONAL SINCERITY AND PROBITY, HAS BECOME A SYMBOL TO MANY OF A COMMITMENT TO PARTY "RENEWAL" AND HAS SOUGHT, WITH THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE DC LEFT OF CENTER FACTIONS, TO MAKE THE DC MORE POLITICALLY APPEALING TO ORGANIZED LABOR, CATHOLIC INTELLECTUALS AND YOUTH. WHEN (MAJORITY) CENTRIST AND CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE PARTY REACTED CRITICALLY TO HIS HEAVY RELIANCE ON ADVISORS DRAWN EXCLUSIVELY FROM PARTY LEFT AND HIS RATHER UNCLEAR INTERPRETATION OF THE MORO "DIALOGUE" (CONFRONTO) POLICY TOWARD THE PCI, ZACCAGNINI MOVED SOMEWHAT CLOSER TO THE POLITICAL CENTER OF GRAVITY WITHIN THE PARTY. HE THEREBY MADE SUFFICIENT INROADS ON CENTRIST STRENGTH TO GIVE HIMSELF A FIGHTING CHANCE TO REMAIN ON AS DC SECRETARY AT THE MARCH CONGRESS SHOULD HE CHOOSE TO MAKE THE EFFORT. ALTHOUGH NOT A PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATOR, ZACCAGNINI HAS PLAYED A USEFUL "ICEBREAKER" RILE IN STIRRING UP FERMENT WITHIN THE DC AND THEREBY ENCOURAGING THE HITHERTO DIVIDED AND WEAK FORCES FAVORING DC POLICY, ORGANIZATIONAL AND GENERATIONAL

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RENEWAL. HOWEVER, HE CONTINUES TO REPLY HEAVILY ON

MORO AND LEADERS OF THE DC LEFT WHOSE BASIC STRATEGY IS UNLIKELY TO HALT THE CURRENT DRIFT TOWARD A "HISTORIC COMPROMISE" WITH THE PCI. IN SUM, ZACCAGNINI THE MAN AND ZACCAGNINI THE "NEW FACE" SYMBOLIZING DC HOPES FOR RENEWAL DESERVE GENERALLY HIGH MARKS. THE MERITS OF ZACCAGNINI THE POLICY MAKER ARE CONSIDERABLY LESS CLEAR. END SUMMARY.

THE MAN:

1. BENIGNO ZACCAGNINI IS A VERY ATTRACTIVE INDIVIDUAL, PERSONALLY RESPECTED BY FRIEND AND FOE ALIKE WITHIN THE DC AND IN OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES. HE HAS A FIRM REPUTATION FOR MORAL RECTITUDE, SOCIAL CONSCIENCE, AND A LACK OF THIRST FOR POWER FOR ITS OWN SAKE. HE HAS A GOOD RESISTANCE RECORD AS A PARTISAN MEDICAL OFFICER. HE IS REPORTED TO BE DEEPLY RELIGIOUS AND TO LEAD AN EXEMPLARY FAMILY LIFE. AN INFORMAL MEMO IN EMBASSY FILES (1959) REFERS TO HIM AS "MOST COMPLETELY MORAL ITALIAN" (EMBOFF) HAS KNOWN.

2. IN HIS CONTACTS WITH THE EMBASSY SINCE HIS ELECTION AS DC SECRETARY ZACCAGNINI HAS MADE A CONSISTENTLY GOOD PERSONAL IMPRESSION. HE HAS COME ACROSS AS "HONEST, HARD-WORKING, STRAIGHTFORWARD AND SINCERE" (ROME 13863). ALTHOUGH A CHRONIC STOMACH ULCER HAMPERED HIS PERFORMANCE DURING THE FIRST MONTHS OF HIS SECRETARYSHIP, HE HAS BEEN IN BETTER HEALTH IN RECENT MONTHS AND WAS PARTICULARLY ACTIVE DURING THE JANUARY-FEBRUARY GOVERNMENT CRISIS.

3. ZACCAGNINI'S CRITICS CHARGE THAT HE LACK A SUFFICIENT DEGREE OF EXECUTIVE VIGOR AND ORGANIZATIONAL ABILITY AND THAT HE WOULD THEREFORE MAKE A POOR DC LEADER IN THE EVENT OF EARLY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. HIS EXECUTIVE ABILITY IS HARD TO JUDGE, SINCE SOME OF THE MANY FAILINGS OF THE DC ORGANIZATION WERE ALSO EVIDENT UNDER FANFANI, WHILE OTHERS ARE ASCRIBED BY SECRETARIAT SOURCES AS DUE TO DELIBERATE SABOTAGE BY ANTI-ZACCAGNINI ELEMENTS IN THE PARTY BUREAUCRACY. ON BALANCE, WE HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT ZACCAGNINI'S HEALTH AND HIS PENCHANT TO REMAIN
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ABOVE THE NITTY GRITTY OF THE POLITICAL FRAY HAVE HAMPERED HIM IN HIS NEW ROLE. WHILE HE APPEARS TO HAVE DONE AN ADEQUATE JOB IN THE ROUTINE ADMINISTRATION OF PARTY AFFAIRS, WE DOUBT THAT HE HAS THE ORGANIZATIONAL FLAIR NECESSARY TO LEAD THE DC SUCCESSFULLY IN A MAJOR ELECTORAL BATTLE.

4. THE FACT THAT THE APPOINTMENT OF A 63-YEAR-OLD,

SECOND ECHELON POLITICIAN (FIRST ELECTED TO PARLIAMENT IN 1946) TO HEAD THE DC COULD HAVE STIRRED UP AS MUCH ENTHUSIASM AS IT DID SAY MORE ABOUT THE SAD STATE OF THE DC'S PUBLIC IMAGE THAN ABOUT THE NEW SECRETARY HIMSELF. ZACCAGNINI'S INSTANT APPEAL WAS BASED ON HIS FAVORABLE PERSONAL QUALITIES AND THE FACT THAT HE REPRESENTED A "NEW FACE" AT THE HELM. THIS, COMBINED WITH HIS POPULIST SENTIMENTS AND DESIRE TO CHANGE THE PARTY POLITICALLY AND ORGANIZATIONALLY GAVE HIM THE IMAGE OF A PROGRESSIVE REFORMER CAPABLE OF REVITALIZING A TIRED AND DISPIRITED DC STUNNED BY ITS JUNE 15 ELECTORAL REVERSE.

5. ZACCAGNINI'S REFORM IMAGE MEANT DIFFERENT THINGS TO MANY PEOPLE. MANY IN THE PARTY RANK AND FILE TO WHOM ZACCAGNINI SPOKE IN TRIPS AROUND THE COUNTRY WERE ENTHUSED AT THE PROSPECT THAT THEIR VOICE WOULD HENCEFORTH HAVE GREATER WEIGHT IN PARTY COUNCILS. A MAJORITY OF DC YOUTH WERE DELIGHTED BY "ZAC" AND THE FACT THAT HE EMPHASIZED THEIR IMPORTANCE AND NEED FOR A GREATER ROLE IN THE PARTY FOLLOWING FANFANI'S AUTOCRATIC HANDLING OF YOUTH AFFAIRS. CISL LABLR LEADERS WERE PLEASED BY ZACCAGNINI'S EMPHASIS ON THE NEED FOR THE PARTY TO FOLLOW A POPULIST COURSE. CISL SECRETARY STORTI AND OTHER CISL LEADERS CHANGED TO A NOTABLY MORE PRO-DC STANCE AS A RESULT OF ZACCAGNINI'S OVERTURES. SOME DISSIDENT CATHOLIC INTELLECTUALS (E.G., SCOPPOLA, PRATESI, GORRIEREI LA VALLE) MOVED CLOSER TO THE DC FOLD. AND, MOST IMPORTANT, A NUMBER OF "YOUNG TURKS" IN THE PARTY (FROM ALL FACTIONS), LONG DENIED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE BY THE OLD GUARD LEADERS, SAW THEIR CHANCE TO USE THE ZACCAGNINI-INITIATED REFORM MOVEMENT AS A MEANS OF ACHIEVING A GENERATIONAL CHANGE WITHIN THE PARTY.

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6. THE FERMENT GENERATED BY ZACCAGNINI'S REFORM EFFORTS UNLEASHED CREATIVE FORCES WITHIN THE PARTY AND BEGAN TO CHANGE (SLIGHTLY) THE PUBLIC IMAGE OF THE DC AS A PARTY OF TIRED AND (OFTEN) CORRUPT OLD MEN INCREASINGLY INCAPABLE OF OFFERING EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT. FORMERLY CRITICAL NON-MARXIST ORIENTED NEWSPAPERS LIKE CORRIERE DELLA SERA AND LA STAMPA BEGAN TO TAKE A LESS CAUSTIC LINE IN COMMENTING ON DC AFFAIRS AND HAVE BEEN KIND IN THEIR TREATMENT OF ZACCAGNINI PERSONALLY. THE CHURCH GAVE INDICATIONS OF APPRECIATION FOR THE NEW ZACCAGNINI DC IMAGE. THE POSITIVE RESULTS OF THE NEW IMAGE GIVEN BY "ZAC" LED A NUMBER OF DC LEADERS TO CONCLUDE THAT THE PARTY WOULD DO REASONABLY WELL IN THE EVENT OF EARLY ELECTIONS. AS ONE DC LEADER PUT IT, THE "PROMISE OF CHANGE" HELD OUT BY ZACCAGNINI MIGHT BE EVEN MORE

EFFECTIVE IN GARNERING VOTES FOR THE PARTY THAN ANY
ACTUAL CHANGE THAT HE WAS LIKELY TO REALIZE.

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7. WHILE THE "ZACCAGNINI IMAGE" HAS BEEN HIGHLY POSITIVE FOR THE PARTY, TWO RECENT EVENTS HAVE COMBINED TO TARNISH ITS LUSTER. THE FIRST HAS BEEN THE EXTREMELY DAMAGING IMPACT OF THE CIA AND LOCKHEED SCANDALS ON THE DC'S PUBLIC IMAGE. THESE HIGHLY TOUTED AFFAIRS HAVE MORE THAN REVERSED THE INCREASINGLY POSITIVE PUBLIC IMAGE OF THE DC WHICH ZACCAGNINI HAD BEGUN TO PROJECT. THE SECOND FACTOR, WHICH HAS SOMEWHAT DAMAGED ZACCAGNINI'S STANDING WITHIN THE PARTY ITSELF, IS HIS PERFORMANCE DURING THE RECENT GOVERNMENT CRISIS. A NUMBER OF DC "YOUNG TURKS" HAVE VIGOROUSLY CRITICIZED "ZAC" AND MORO FOR THEIR DISREGARD FOR THE OPINIONS OF THE DC MIDDLE LEADERSHIP IN THE CONDUCT OF CRISIS NEGOTIATIONS. ZACCAGNINI HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY CRITICIZED FOR "NOT STANDING UP TO MORO" BY BACKING "YOUNG TURK" DEMANDS FOR A CHANGE OF FACES IN GOVERNMENT RANKS. WHILE THIS CRITICISM IS NOT UNIVERSALLY SHARED, IT HAS MADE YOUNGER LEADERS DOUBT ZACCAGNINI'S COMMITMENT TO GENERATIONAL CHANGE.

THE POLICY:

8. IT IS ON POLICY GROUNDS THAT ZACCAGNINI'S LEADERSHIP OF THE DC GIVES US PAUSE. ZACCAGNINI IS CLOSELY TIED TO PREMIER MORO AND, PARTICULARLY IN THE FIRST FEW MONTHS

OF THIS SECRETARYSHIP, HAS BEEN HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY HIS
POLICY ADVISORS LIKE GALLONI, BODRATO AND BELCO, ALL
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DRAWN FROM THE LEFT OF THE DC PARTY. WHILE FORCED IN
NOVEMBER TO MODERATE HIS LEFTWARDS POLICY SHIFT IN ORDER
TO HOLD HIS POST AND TO ATTRACT SUPPORT FROM DISSIDENT
CENTRISTS LIKE RUMOR AND COMLOMBO, THE "ZACCAGNINI POLICY
LINE" REMAINS TO THE LEFT OF CENTER IN THE DC SPECTRUM.

9. BRIEFLY STATED, THE POLICY OF THE ZACCAGNINI SECRETARIAT
HAS BEEN: (A) TO SHIFT DC POLICIES IN ORDER TO SEEK VOTES
TO THE LEFT OF THE PARTY, PARTICULARLY AMONG ORGANIZED
LABOR, YOUTH AND DISSIDENT CATHOLIC INTELLECTUALS; (B)
TO WORK TOWARD AN ACCORD WITH THE SOCIALISTS BY ACCEPTING MANY
ELEMENTS OF THEIR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICIES; AND (C) TO
PURSUE A DIALOGUE WITH THE COMMUNISTS PERMITTING COMPROMISE
LEGISLATIVE ACCORDS ON ESSENTIAL ISSUES AND PRECLUDING
OPEN CONFRONTATION TENDING TO POLARIZE THE POLITICAL
DEBATE BETWEEN RIGHT AND LEFT. SOME LEFT-HAND DC LEADERS
CLOSE TO ZACCAGNINI (LIKE GRANELLI AND CALLONI) GO
SIGNIFICANTLY FURTHER AND OPENLY CALL FOR DISCUSSING
WITH THE PCI THE "CONDITIONS" ON WHICH THEY MIGHT
EVENTUALLY ENTER THE GOVERNING MAJORITY. ZACCAGNINI
HIMSELF PUBLICALLY AND PRIVATELY EXCLUDES PCI ENTRY INTO
THE GOVERNMENT, BUT HIS STANCE IS CONSIDERABLY LESS
FIRM THAN THAT EXPRESSED BY DC CENTRISTS LIKE FORLANI.

10 WHILE MANY ELEMENTS OF THIS POLICY, PARTICULARLY THE
RECOGNITION OF THE NEED TO PRESS URGENT SOCIAL REFORMS,
ARE OBVIOUSLY ESSENTIAL, TAKEN AS A WHOLE THE ZACCAGNINI
LINE IS UNLIKELY TO MOST EFFECTIVELY APPEAL TO THE
TRADITIONAL DC MODERATE ELECTORATE. AS IMPORTANT,
THIS LINE AS INTERPRETED BY THE PARTY LEFT HAS A FATALISTIC,
DEFENSIVE QUALITY IN CHARACTERIZING DC-PCI RELATIONS.

11. ALTHOUGH PARTIAL TO THE OPINIONS OF THE LEFT WING OF
THE DC PARTY, ZACCAGNINI HAS SHOWN A WILLINGNESS TO AVOID
THE EXTREME POSITIONS OF SOME OF HIS LEFTIST ADVISORS IN
ORDER TO SEEK A MAJORITY WITHIN THE PARTY. HHW HAS MOVED
SEVERAL STEPS TOWARD THE DC CENTER OF POLITICAL GRAVITY
IN ORDER TO HOLD THE SUPPORT OF DISSIDENT DOROTEI LIKE
RUMOR AND GULLOTTI AND OF THE COMOMBO FORCES. THUS,
SHOULD A DEAL BE MADE PERMITTING HIM TO BE CONFIRMED AT
THE CONGRESS BY A MAJORITY INCLUDING MORE ELEMENTS FROM
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THE DC CENTER (E.G., FIRLANI, BISAGLIA), HIS POLICY WOULD NO DOUBT BE CONDITIONED ACCORDINGLY. SINCE THE POLITICAL SITUATION SINCE JUNE 15 HAS BEEN MOVING STEADILY LEFTWARDS AND THE DC HAS HAD TO TAKE THIS INTO ACCOUNT, A ZACCAGNINI LINE MODIFIED TO TAKE A SOMEWHAT FIRMER ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PCI COULD FIND SUPPORT FROM A MAJORITY WITHIN THE PARTY.

CONCLUSION:

12. SUMMING UP, WE BELIEVE THAT ZACCAGNINI DESERVES HIGH MARKES AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND FOR THE POSITIVE, REFORM IMAGE HE HAS MANAGED TO CREATE. ABOVE ALL, HE DESERVES CREDIT FOR HIS ROLE IN STIRRING UP A MUCH NEEDED FERMENT WITHIN THE PARTY WHICH BURST A NUMBER OF TRADITIONAL FACTIONAL ALIGNMENTS AND STIMULATED VIGOROUS DEMANDS FOR GENERATIONAL CHANGE. ZACCAGNINI HAS AT VARIOUS TIMES STATED UNACCEPTABILITY OF PCI PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT WITH DC. HOWEVER, ON OTHER OCCASIONS HIS PUBLICLY STATED VIEWS ON PCI, ESPECIALLY IN HIS EFFORT TO EXPLAIN HIS "CONFRONTO" POLICY, HAVE INCLUDED WAFFLES AND HAVE LACKED CLEAR-CUT FORTHRIGHTNESS. THE CONCERN CREATED BY THIS IMPRECISION IS ACCENTUATED BY "SOFTNESS" ON PCI OF SEVERAL OF HIS CLOSEST ASSOCIATES IN DC SECRETARIAT (E.G., GRANELLI).BEAUDRY

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